

Shining like the Sun

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Eight Sunday after Pentecost) is Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. This text is the parable of the Weeds and its explanation.

Jesus introduces the second of his seven parables in Matthew 13 by making a comparison to the kingdom of heaven. This little story is about what it is like now that God has begun to restore His royal rule in the present time of Jesus' ministry. This is a story that communicates at least the following to the crowds: for the present time, do not expect Jesus' ministry to be different than it has been. The crowds have not yet believed. Though curious and at times positive toward Jesus, they are not His disciples, His true family.

After the crowd departs without understanding, Jesus reveals to the disciples the meaning of the parable of the weeds. The disciples do not, of course, fully understand the mysteries of the reign of God now at work in Jesus. Nor are they even close to fully understanding Jesus. God has, however, revealed to them that this Jesus is the one in whom the reign of God is happening, and they are His disciples. As they look around at how things are going and they wonder about how things will transpire, Jesus interprets the parable of the Weeds of the Field for them and lays deliberate emphasis upon the final goal toward which the reign of God will inevitably press. His purpose is to reassure them. It is comforting to us as well.

Jesus now draws the comparison between the characters in the parable and those in the kingdom of heaven. Sower of good seed: Son of Man; the field: cosmos or world; good seed: sons of the Kingdom; the false seeds: sons of the evil one; the hostile sower: the devil; harvest season: completion of the age.

The "good seed" represents the Gospel, the life-giving Word. Through God's grace he has brought us into faith and continues to strengthen our faith.

Jesus describes a grim judgment and fate for the sons of evil. They are thrown into the fiery furnace. The "fiery furnace" is an image of punishment in hell. The "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is figurative for excruciating pain.

Jesus' description of "righteous shining like the sun" paints the image of golden wheat at harvest shining in the sun with Christ's righteousness. The righteous will reflect light similar to Jesus at His transfiguration. Our names will be written in the Book of Life.

Prayer: O God, help me to accept the fact that in this world good and evil will grow side by side. Lead me also to count on your wise timing and judgment. Bless me, Jesus, with a believing heart, that I may remain a child of your kingdom. Amen. (TLSB)